

Message Text

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TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 161223

NODIS

FOR BRZEZINSKI ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT TOKYO 10376 ACTION SECSTATE JUL 12.

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 10376

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY VANCE FROM AMBASSADOR MANSFIELD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, TECH, ENRG, JA

SUBJECT: THE REPROCESSING ISSUE AND FUTURE U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS

1. I HAVE BEEN AT THIS POST ONLY A FEW WEEKS BUT IT IS NOW
CLEAR TO ME THAT THERE IS ONE POLITICAL ISSUE BETWEEN
US AND JAPAN THAT WARRANTS MY SENDING YOU A DIRECT MESSAGE.
I REFER TO THE NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING PROBLEM THAT LIES
BEFORE BOTH GOVERNMENTS. I SUGGEST THAT ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE
THE PROBLEM HAVE REACHED A CRITICAL STAGE. ACTIONS TO BE
TAKEN SUBSEQUENTLY COULD HAVE PROFOUNDLY ADVERSE EFFECTS ON
OUR FUTURE RELATIONS UNLESS WE URGENTLY SEEK A COMPROMISE
WHICH BALANCES NON-PROLIFERATION CONCERNS AGAINST ENERGY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 161223

NEEDS AND WHICH INSURES THAT THE REPROCESSING ISSUE IS
ADDRESSED IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR OVERALL RELATIONSHIP.

2. FOR REASONS WHICH THE EMBASSY HAS ANALYZED AND REPORTED
OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT VIEWS
THE REPROCESSING ISSUE AS AFFECTING ITS VITAL INTERESTS IN
WAYS WHICH OUR CURRENT ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES, FOR EXAMPLE, DO NOT.

THE CLAIM HAS BEEN MADE BY HIGH-LEVEL JAPANESE OFFICIALS THAT THE U.S. DOES NOT UNDERSTAND JAPAN'S EXTRAORDINARY ENERGY PREDICAMENT, ITS COMMITMENT TO SOLELY PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY, AND THE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST JAPAN VIS-A-VIS THE WESTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS RELATED TO THE US-JAPAN NUCLEAR COOPERATION AGREEMENT. I ATTRIBUTE SOME OF THIS DISCORD TO THE RECENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN, BUT THERE IS WIDE-SPREAD AGREEMENT AMONG JAPANESE ON THIS ISSUE AND A FACTUAL BASE TO THE JAPANESE ARGUMENTS WHICH WE MUST BE ALERT TO AND WHICH WE MUST ADDRESS CAREFULLY AND THOUGHTFULLY AS THE NEXT ROUND OF POLITICAL-LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS APPROACHES.

3. SPECIFICALLY, THE ISSUE BECAME SERIOUS HERE IN APRIL, WHEN PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENTS, BOTH IN PUBLIC AND IN PRIVATE TO PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA, INDICATED THAT JAPAN COULD PROCEED WITH REPROCESSING, ONLY TO BE FOLLOWED BY "INTERPRETATIONS" OF THESE STATEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY. CHARGES OF "BAD FAITH" WERE LEVELED AGAINST USG OFFICIALS, ALTHOUGH SUBSEQUENTLY A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT TO FUKUDA CARRIED BY SECRETARY BLUMENTHAL STATED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD NO INTENTION OF AUTHORIZING OPERATION OF THE TOKAI MURA REPROCESSING PLANT AS ORIGINALLY INTENDED BY JAPANESE. THE PRESIDENT DID, HOWEVER, STATE THAT A COMPROMISE MODE OF OPERATION WOULD BE SOUGHT THROUGH NEGOTIATION. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 161223

4. THE LATEST PHASE OF NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF TOKAI IS NOW REACHING A CONCLUSION IN THE FORM OF A JOINT TECHNICAL REPORT WHICH WILL BE SUBMITTED TO BOTH GOVERNMENTS AROUND JULY 12. I HAVE BEEN BRIEFED ON THE NATURE AND CONTENT OF THIS REPORT: IT OUTLINES ABOUT 15 ALTERNATIVE MODES OF OPERATION FOR THE PLANT, SOME OF WHICH WOULD REQUIRE YEARS OF MODIFICATION EFFORT AND HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN COSTS. EVEN THE MOST MODEST CHANGE IN PLANS WILL BE TIME-CONSUMING AND EXPENSIVE. I AM CONVINCED THAT THE JAPANESE ARE PREPARED TO MAKE SOME ALTERATIONS TO THEIR ORIGINAL PLAN, PROVIDED REPEAT PROVIDED THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO A DELAY OF SEVERAL YEARS AND THE EXPENDITURE OF LARGE SUMS OF MONEY BEFORE THE PLANT BEGINS TO FUNCTION. WHAT IS MOST DISTURBING, HOWEVER, IS THAT I HAVE HEARD RUMORS EMANATING FROM WASHINGTON THAT THE TECHNICAL STUDY WILL PROVE TO BE MERELY AN EXERCISE, RATHER THAN THE FOUNDATION FOR A POLITICAL COMPROMISE, AND THAT THERE ARE SOME IN THE USG WHO WILL BE PRESSING THE PRESIDENT TO PERMIT NO REPEAT NO FORM OF REPROCESSING TO OCCUR AT TOKAI MURA.

THE GROUNDS FOR THIS POSITION ARE SAID TO BE (1) WE CANNOT AUTHORIZE THE JAPANESE TO DO SOMETHING WE HAVE FORESWORN OURSELVES; (2) AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTALISTS WILL BRING SUIT AGAINST US TO STOP ANY ACTION WHICH PERMITS THE PLANT TO OPERATE; (3) IF JAPAN IS AUTHORIZED TO PROCEED WITH REPROCESSING IN ANY FORM, OTHER LESS STABLE COUNTRIES WILL DEMAND THE SAME TREATMENT; AND (4) THE PRESIDENT'S NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY WILL BE SERIOUSLY AND PERHAPS IRRETRIEVABLY ERODED.

5. THERE IS OBIOUS MERIT TO THESE CLAIMS, BUT THEY MUST BE BALANCED BY THE POTENTIAL ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES. THE JAPANESE HAVE BEEN EXTRAORDINARILY FORTHCOMING AND COOPERATIVE IN REVEALING TO THE US EXPERTS THE TECHNICAL CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 161223

FEATURES OF THE REPROCESSING PLANT AND HOW ITS DESIGN MIGHT BE MODIFIED TO BETTER MEET US PROLIFERATION CONCERNS. IF, AFTER THIS HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE STUDY IS SUBMITTED TO THE TWO GOVERNMENTS, THE US REJECTS IT AS THE BASIS FOR FURTHER POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS OR SELECTS ALTERNATIVES FROM IT WHICH ARE UNREALISTIC IN TERMS OF DELAY OR COST, AGAIN THE US (AND BY IMPLICATION THE PRESIDENT) WILL BE ACCUSED BY THE JAPANESE OF HAVING NEGOTIATED IN BAD FAITH, FURTHER COMPLICATING THE ISSUE.

6. IN MY PERSONAL OPINION, THE REPERCUSSIONS WILL BE LONG LASTING, SEVERE, AND WIDESPREAD. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE IS ALREADY A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF PRESSURE BUILDING UP TO DIMINISH NUCLEAR SUPPLY TIES WITH THE U.S. AND TO TURN TOWARD THE SOVIETS FOR URANIUM ENRICHMENT SERVICES, AND TOWARDS THE GERMANS, THE SWEDES, AND OTHERS FOR ADVANCED POWER PLANT TECHNOLOGY -- LARGELY DUE TO THE PERCEPTION THAT THE U.S. IS NO LONGER A DEPENDABLE ALLY IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD. MOREOVER, FOR DECADES THE JAPANESE HAVE PERCEIVED ASSURED ENERGY SUPPLIES AS ESSENTIAL TO SURVIVAL, WITH REMARKABLY FEW EXCEPTIONS, JAPANESE NOW SEE NUCLEAR ENERGY -- AND DOMESTIC REPROCESSING -- AS INDISPENSABLE ELEMENTS IN MEETING THEIR FUTURE ENERGY NEEDS. OUR FAILURE TO HEED THESE BASIC CONCERNS COULD, I BELIEVE, LEAD THEM TO QUESTION THE NATURE OF OUR "PARTNERSHIP" WITH ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR SHARED WORLDWIDE ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES AND NORTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY. AND LAST, THE ILL WILL CAUSED AMONG THE JAPANESE PEOPLE IN GENERAL OVER WHAT THEY SEE AS THE HEAVY HAND OF THE U.S. BEING BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THEM, IN A WAY WHICH COULD THREATEN THEIR PERSONAL WELL-BEING AND SECURITY, IS A FACTOR THAT MAY NOT BE IMMEDIATELY QUANTIFIABLE BUT WHICH IS REAL AND PERVASIVE. IF THIS IS TO BE AVOIDED, COMPROMISE AS PROPOSED BY THE PRESIDENT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 161223

7. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO OFFER TO YOU THE TECHNICAL BASIS FOR A COMPROMISE; I LEAVE THAT TO THE EXPERTS ON BOTH SIDES. HOWEVER, I AM OF THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE OPINION THAT, FIRST, A COMPROMISE IS MANDATORY IF THE BILATERAL ALLIANCE IS TO BE PRESERVED IN A FORM THAT IS FREE OF LINGERING JAPANESE SUSPICIONS AND BEST ENCOURAGES POSITIVE JAPANESE SUPPORT. SECOND, THE COMPROMISE MUST BE REACHED EXPEDITIOUSLY -- WITHIN A VERY FEW MONTHS AT THE MOST; TO PROCRASTINATE LONGER WILL ACT TO HARDEN EACH SIDE'S POSITION. THIRD, THE COMPROMISE MUST INCLUDE PERMISSION FOR THE TOKAI PLANT TO OPERATE IN SOME FASHION AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME. AND FOURTH, THE JAPANESE MUST BE PERMITTED TO RETAIN THE OPTION OF OPERATING THE PLANT FOR COMMERCIAL REPROCESSING PURPOSES IN THE EVENT THAT THE U.S. IS UNSUCCESSFUL IN STOPPING PLUTONIUM REPROCESSING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

8. FINALLY, IN OUR CONSIDERATION OF THIS ISSUE WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT THE JAPANESE WILL BE COMPARING THEIR TREATMENT TO THAT WE ACCORD OUR WEST EUROPEAN ALLIES, IN PARTICULAR WEST GERMANY. THEY WILL ASK THEMSELVES, UNDERSTANDABLY I BELIEVE, WHETHER WE GIVE JAPAN'S NPT PLEDGES LESS CREDENCE THAN THOSE OF THE EUROPEANS AND WHETHER WE ARE PREPARED TO DENY THEM NUCLEAR FACILITIES WHICH THEIR EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL ALLIES -- AND COMPETITORS -- ALREADY HAVE. THESE ARE, OF COURSE, EXTRAORDINARILY DIFFICULT QUESTIONS TO FIELD; THEY GO DIRECTLY TO THE HEART OF THE TRILATERAL CONCEPT.

9. IF YOU CONSIDER THESE PERSONAL VIEWS TO HAVE MERIT, I WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD MENTION THEM TO THE PRESIDENT. I ALSO OFFER MY SERVICES IN REACHING A NEGOTIATED COMPROMISE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POSITION TO BE TAKEN BY THE PRESIDENT.
MANSFIELD UNQUOTE VANCE

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